

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. – 10. (Cancelled).

11. (Currently Amended) A method for treating congestive heart failure, said method comprising:

placing a band having a first end and a second end around a beating heart;
~~wherein the band is configured to leave a gap between the first and second ends; and~~

drawing the first and second ends of the band toward each other by connecting a supporting spring member between the first and second ends of the band, the supporting spring member spanning the gap and having a biodegradable element which delays the first and second ends of the band from drawing together for a preselected time after placing the band around the heart, wherein the spring will act to draw the ends together and to provide support to a myocardial wall of the heart over time, and wherein the band is configured to leave a gap between the first and second ends after the first and second ends have been drawn together.

12. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 11, wherein the first and second ends are located on opposite sides of a region of infarcted tissue.

13. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 12, wherein the first and second ends adhere to opposite sides of the region of infarcted tissue.

14. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 11, wherein the supporting spring member comprises a spring under tension disposed between said first and second ends of the band.

15. – 17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 11, further comprising introducing the band to the heart.

19. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 18, wherein the band is placed at or below the anteriorventricular groove.

20. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 18, wherein introducing comprises advancing the band via a subxiphoid approach.

21. (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 11, wherein said drawing of the ends of the band treats the anatomic complication of ventricle septal rupture.

22. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 11, wherein said drawing of the ends of the band treats the anatomic complication of mitral regurgitation.

23. (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 11, wherein said drawing of the ends of the band treats the anatomic complication of ventricular aneurysm.

24. (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 11, wherein said drawing of the ends of the band treats the anatomic complication of ATC.